

COVID vaccines available soon at some local pharmacies

Louisiana will next week receive the first very limited doses of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine that can be administered at specified community pharmacies. The vaccines will be available only for healthcare workers in ambulatory/outpatient settings and to people 70 years of age and older.

Initially, these doses will be VERY limited, but supplies will increase over time.

The goal is to make the vaccine available statewide. Pharmacies that will receive the vaccine will be selected randomly from those enrolled in the LINKS system (Louisiana's immunization information system). Pharmacies that are registered in LINKS that are not selected in this first round can expect vaccine when Louisiana receives additional shipments.

Patient:

- **Who?** Ambulatory/outpatient health workers and people 70 years of age and older.
- **Cost?** No charge to patient although insurance can be accepted for administration fee.
- **Appointment Only.** Patient must call pharmacy and make appointment.
- **Identification:** Patient must provide ID showing proof of age, and an ID badge showing employment at an ambulatory/outpatient health clinic/center. We want all Louisianans to have access to the vaccine, regardless of immigration status.

Pharmacy:

- **Vaccine Storage:** Receiving entities take full responsibility to store vaccine appropriately, ensure adequate security, and ensure all available doses are used and not wasted.
- **Patient Identification:** Receiving entities must perform reasonable due diligence to ensure those being vaccinated fit in the current priority groups. Only in the event of eminent risk of vaccine loss/expiration should individuals outside of defined priority groups be vaccinated.
- **Scheduling: Vaccinations will be performed by appointment only.** No lines should be allowed to form. Pharmacies should keep a waiting list for those who are awaiting vaccine.
- **Second Dose:** Do not save any vaccine for second doses. Pharmacies will receive a subsequent allotment of vaccine for second doses. The expectation is individuals will receive their second vaccine dose at the same facility as their first dose. Pharmacies and other vaccinators bare responsibility for scheduling arrangements to ensure individuals receive appropriate appointments for their second dose. Pharmacies and other vaccinators should have protocols in place to contact individuals whom they have administer a first dose to remind them of their second dose appointment and encourage compliance.
- **Customer Service:** Receiving entities must be prepared to answer a higher than normal volume of incoming calls, counsel callers, and schedule appointments appropriately.
- **LINKS:** All vaccinations must be entered into LINKS within 24 hours.
- **Vaccine Management:** Receiving entities take full responsibility for tracking incoming vaccine shipments and properly receiving the delivery.

Louisiana Department of Health (LDH):

- **Promotion:** LDH will publicize pharmacies/clinics receiving vaccine and their contact information starting on January 4.